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AN INVESTIGATION OF PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE
HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM IN VULCAN COUNTY

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM IN VULCAN COUNTY submitted by Teresa MacIsaac in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation was to gain insight into parental perceptions of the high school curricular program in Vulcan County. The sample consisted of sixty per cent of the total population of parents of the grade eleven students in Vulcan County in the school year 1964-1965. The interview technique, based on a series of semi-standardized questions, was used to gather data. The data were summarized in point form and then quantified to get the frequency of responses for each item and the percentage each was of the total number. A limited amount of documentation also was employed.

The finding that stood out in this investigation is the high regard parents had for the matriculation program. A large majority of the parents wanted their children to take the matriculation program. All of the parents of matriculants were program-placement-satisfied whereas the majority of the parents of non-matriculants were not. Of all the sub-groups of parents, parents of matriculants had the highest median level of program satisfaction and the parents of non-matriculants had the lowest.

Vocational aspirations appeared to be the most important factor determining program satisfaction on the part of parents of matriculants, and academic success appeared to be the most important determiner of program satisfaction on the part of parents of non-matriculants.

Parents did not view the matriculation and non-matriculation programs as having similar values. The majority of the reasons for program dissatisfaction given by parents of matriculants reflected their concern for the academic success of their children whereas the majority of the reasons given by the parents of non-matriculants reflected their program-placement-dissatisfaction.

The parental demand for vocational education was small. Most of the parents who regarded vocational education to be a task of the high school wanted the school to offer vocational courses of an exploratory nature rather than vocational training for a specific job. Most of the parents wished the high schools to offer similar programs for boys and girls, and this stand appeared to reflect parental desire to have both take the matriculation program.

Program placement appeared to be a determiner of educational viewpoint, but place of residence and sex of offspring did not.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM.....	1
Background of the Problem.....	1
Definition of Terms Used.....	5
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Delimitation of the Study.....	9
Significance of the Study.....	9
Design of the Study.....	10
Overview.....	12
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	14
American Studies.....	15
Canadian Studies.....	24
Conclusion.....	32
III. PROCEDURE.....	34
The Pilot Study.....	34
The Sample.....	35
The Interview Technique.....	37
Methods of Analysis.....	40
IV. FINDINGS.....	41
Introduction.....	41
Kinds of Educational Programs Desired by	
Parents.....	42
Programs Wanted by Parents.....	42

CHAPTER

PAGE

Parental Views on Vocational Education	
as A Task of the High School.....	45
Parental Opinions Regarding Different	
Programs for Girls and Boys.....	54
Parental Satisfaction With Program	
Placement and Programs.....	57
Program-Placement-Satisfaction.....	58
Program Satisfaction.....	61
Reasons for Program Satisfaction.....	64
Reasons for Program Dissatisfaction.....	68
Parental Opinion Regarding Program	
Obstacles.....	75
Parental Attitude Toward the Non-	
Matriculation Programs.....	77
Determiners of Educational Viewpoint.....	78
Summary of Findings.....	85
V. CONCLUSION.....	90
Summary of the Study.....	90
Conclusions.....	91
Implications.....	93
Theoretical Implications.....	94
Practical Implications.....	95
Summation.....	96
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	97
APPENDIX.....	100

CHAPTER

PAGE

Programs, Courses and Credits Offered

in Grade Eleven in County Central

High School.....	101
Record Form for Interviews.....	102

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Kinds of Educational Programs Parents Wanted for Their Children in Grade Eleven.....	44
II. Extent to Which Parents Regarded Vocational Education or Training to be Part of the Job of the High School.....	46
III. Kinds of Vocational Education or Training Parents Thought Schools Should Offer.....	49
IV. Summary of Reasons why Parents Thought the High Schools Should Offer Vocational Education or Training.....	51
V. Summary of Reasons why Parents Thought the High Schools Should not Offer Vocational Education or Training.....	53
VI. Numbers and Percentages of Parents Desiring Different Programs for Girls and Boys.....	55
VII. Extent to Which Parents were Program- Placement-Satisfied.....	60
VIII. Level of Parental Program Satisfaction.....	63
IX. Reasons for Program Satisfaction Stated by Parents of Matriculants.....	65
X. Reasons for Program Satisfaction Stated by Parents of Non-Matriculants.....	67

TABLE

PAGE

XI.	Reasons for Program Dissatisfaction Stated by Parents of Matriculants.....	69
XII.	Reasons for Program Dissatisfaction Stated by Parents of Non-Matriculants.....	72
XIII.	Summary of Factors Parents Regarded as the Greatest Program Obstacles.....	76
XIV.	Relationship Between Variation in Parental Response and Place of Residence.....	79
XV.	Relationship Between Variation in Parental Response and Sex of Offspring.....	82
XVI.	Relationship Between Variation in Parental Response and Program Placement.....	84

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

I. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

What shall the schools teach? This question has confounded educators for centuries. The dominant social forces of a particular era and the powerful pressure groups associated with them have played a large part in determining the kinds of educational programs offered in the schools. The influence of the latter on this continent was evident in the swing in emphasis in our schools from moral, to civic, to social, to vocational education.

Society's recent and urgent demands for some form of secondary education for all students and for technically trained manpower are reflected in the current emphasis on vocational education in the high school. With these demands came the development of the composite high school and the concomitant reorganization of the school program into the multi-track curriculum.

The men responsible for organizing the educational program in Alberta stated that their fundamental goal was to provide a sound education for all.¹ In recent years they

¹"Report on Proposed Changes in the Secondary School Program for Edmonton Public Schools", (Edmonton: Department of Education, 1963), p. 7. (Mimeographed.)

have come to believe that this can be achieved most effectively through a streamed program designed to accommodate the varied abilities, interests, and aspirations of the increasingly large numbers of students who are endeavouring to complete high school. Accordingly, the high school program has been diversified into a number of streams or tracks of a matriculation, general, commercial, technical, vocational, and pre-vocational nature, or some combination thereof.

The allocation of students into the various streams or tracks has become a provocative issue. That an element of compulsion in placing students is favored by some educators is apparent from certain statements in leading educational publications in Alberta. The 1963 "Report on Proposed Changes in the Secondary School Program for Edmonton Public Schools" pointed out that:

The Cameron Commission recognizes the weaknesses in the present system of free choice of programs by students in the forceful statement on page 92: "Achievement at the grade nine level must become a stronger factor in determining the courses in which the student is entitled to register in grade ten."²

The same report drew attention to what the brief referred to as "the need for improvement in the selection of the appropriate program for the high school student,"³ by quoting the following excerpt from Dr. Swift's address to the Edmonton Teachers' Convention in 1961:

²Ibid., p. 7.

³Ibid., p. 7.

...I suggest the necessity of more differentiation of students at the high school level. This is a complicated matter and at the danger of over-simplification I suggest that ways and means must be found of somehow separating academic (matriculation) students from those who are not matriculation minded or endowed. This, I conclude after many years of observation and listening to debate as to how it can be done, must be based on some form of compulsory segregation, if you will pardon the word, for I despair of it /sic/ being accomplished through guidance only.⁴

The latter kind of thinking is rather frightening, not only because of its implied disregard for parental rights but also in the light of the success of the multi-track program. In the large schools in which streaming is practiced, it would appear that, while this diversification has accommodated a larger percentage of the student body, it has fallen far short of its objective of providing a program to meet the needs and interests of the ever increasing high school student population. Ample testimony to the latter observation is provided by the large number of students who under this system continue to fail to achieve passing grades or else drop out of school. Reflecting on similar situations in the United States, E. O. Melby made the following statement:

... the studies being made of the relationship between IQ and creativity do not encourage us to believe that we can select the students who will be most valuable to their society. We are not yet competent to play God with the destinies of individual human beings.

⁴Ibid., pp. 7-8

The truth is that we don't yet know who can be educated to a relatively high level because we haven't really tried. All we know is that large numbers of young people now fail to make the most of themselves.⁵

The issues thus posed formed part of the problem which was examined in the Small High School study sponsored by the Alberta School Trustees' Association and conducted by the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. Part of the task of this investigation was fact-finding, and this phase of the study would have been remiss if an effort had not been made to obtain the thinking of the parents regarding the high school program. Even though most parents are not education experts, many have valuable insights based on their own children's school experiences. Furthermore, since we live in a democracy, it is assumed that educational policy should reflect the desires and values of the people. In spite of this assumption, seldom is a systematic effort made to obtain the thinking of the public on matters pertaining to education. The following statement was made in the Minority Report of the Alberta Royal Commission on Education:

There is a tendency to abandon the academic program for all but the select few who may go to university. This is a most unrealistic attitude to take, for two very practical reasons: parents, by and large, want their children to take the academic program, and employers want workers who have been trained in an academic program.⁶

⁵Ernest O. Melby, "Expectations for Education", The Education Digest, XXIX, (November, 1963), p. 10.

⁶Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta, (Edmonton: The Queen's Printer, 1959), p. 389.

Here we see that the assumption has been made that the majority of parents want their children to take the academic program. It is very important that an effort be made to determine whether the latter is an accurate statement of parental desire, in view of the recent trend away from this kind of education.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Unless specified otherwise by context, for the purpose of this study, the terms listed below will be used to convey the following meanings:

Parents. This term will be used to refer to the parents of the grade eleven students in Vulcan County in 1964-65.

Farm-residing parents. This term will refer to parents who dwell on and secure their livelihood from a farm.

Non-farm-residing parents. This term will refer to parents who may or may not derive their livelihood from farming, but who do not dwell on a farm.

Program-placement-satisfied. This term will refer to satisfaction with the placement of students in a particular program.

Program-satisfied. This term will refer to satisfaction with a particular program, to distinguish it from program-placement-satisfaction.

Program-obstacles. This term will refer to obstacles to the progress of the students in the programs which they are taking.

Non-matriculation programs.⁷ This term will be used to refer to all the programs offered in the area under study, other than the matriculation program.

Semi-standardized questions. This term will be used to refer to the list of questions that formed the thread of each interview. They were semi-standardized in the sense that the interviewer felt free to clarify the meaning of a question where it was deemed necessary and encouraged the respondents to elaborate their answers.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this investigation was to gain as clear a picture as possible of the perceptions of the high school curricular program held by the parents of the grade eleven students in Vulcan County in the school year 1964-65. In order to clarify this problem, it has been divided into a number of questions. Grouped under appropriate subject headings, the questions into which the problem has been divided are as follows:

⁷The comprehensive school program offered to the Grade XI students in County Central High School in Vulcan is described in the Appendix.

I. Kinds of Educational Programs Desired by Parents

- A. What kinds of educational programs do parents want for their children in grade eleven?
- B. Do parents consider vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school?
- C. Do parents who consider vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school want it for their own children?
- D. What reasons do parents state for considering vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school?
- E. What reasons do parents state for not considering vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school?
- F. Do parents think that boys and girls should have different programs?
- G. For what reasons do parents want different programs for boys and girls?
- H. For what reasons do parents want similar programs for boys and girls?

II. Parental Satisfaction with Program Placement and Programs

- A. Are parents program-placement-satisfied?
- B. Do parents who are dissatisfied with the placement of their children in the non-matriculation programs regard vocational education or training to be part of the job of the high school?
- C. To what extent are parents program-satisfied?
- D. For what reasons are parents program-satisfied?
- E. For what reasons are parents program-dissatisfied?

- F. What do parents consider to be the greatest program-obstacles?
- G. Do parents question the value of the non-matriculation programs offered by the high schools?

III. Determiners of Educational Viewpoint

- A. Is place of residence a determiner of educational viewpoint?
- B. Is sex of offspring a determiner of educational viewpoint?
- C. Is program-placement a determiner of educational viewpoint?

These questions fall into two categories: (1) Those for which answers may be drawn directly from information obtained as a result of tabulating the original data, and (2) those for which answers may be sought in the trends and inter-relationships among the findings. The questions in the second category became apparent from the nature of the original findings, and the investigator believed that the expansion of the problem to include these questions would ensure greater use of the information obtained through this study. Questions IC, IIB, IIG, IIIA, IIIB, and IIIC fall into the second category. All the rest of the questions fall into the first category. Both types of questions are treated together under appropriate subject headings. This type of organization should provide for greater unity and brevity than separate treatment of the two types of questions.

IV. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to an investigation of parental perceptions of the high school curricular program in Vulcan County. The extra-curricular program was deliberately excluded from consideration, for it was thought that this would constitute a separate investigation.

In view of the fact that the interview technique was used to gather data, the sample was limited to include either parent of sixty per cent of the total population of grade eleven students in Vulcan County.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that this investigation will provide significant information regarding the desires and values which parents hold regarding the school program. Very little research relating to this topic has been conducted. In each case, the available research on this topic in Alberta was done as a part of a larger study, and hence the findings tend to be brief and somewhat superficial. Furthermore, it is hoped that the information obtained will make a significant contribution to the Small High School Study to which reference was made earlier in this chapter. It is expected that as a result of the Small High School Study, innovations will be made in high school education in Alberta. If the educational program is to be changed and if these changes are to be effective, they should reflect the desires of parents, as well as those of educators.

This study of parental perceptions also could serve to reveal gaps in information or misunderstandings on the part of parents regarding the educational program. Such findings would be of considerable use in planning public relations programs aimed at helping the public to become better informed on educational matters. Another important contribution which this study could make lies in its implications for further research. Because of the intensive nature of the study, trends and interrelationships may be noted in the findings which may prove to be well worth testing on a larger population.

VI. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The semi-structured interview technique was used to gain the information required for this study. This technique was decided upon after efforts to gather data by other techniques had failed. The initial procedure involved the construction of a questionnaire which was intended for administration to groups considered to be representative of various cross-sections of the population of Alberta. For the pilot study, a series of seven cases was designed to focus thinking on the different types of placement problems faced by the high school. After reading each case, the respondents were asked to react to these two questions: (1) In what program would place this student? (2) The school placed

him in this program. (A program was specified for each case.) Do you agree or disagree with the school's decision? State reasons for your response. The first question was closed in nature, for the respondents were given a list of all the different types of programs from which they were to make their choice. The second question was open-ended. This and all further revisions failed to elicit meaningful data when it was tried on a pilot group of twenty-four people, made up of parents and teachers. The pilot study, however, proved to be valuable in that it revealed the type of question to which parents would respond and the type of information which they were able to apply. On the basis of the pilot study, it was decided that because of the difficulty parents had in interpreting questions and in expressing themselves and because of the difficulty the investigator had in interpreting the information they provided, the most effective technique which could be used to gather data was that of the personal interview.

Following the pilot study, a series of semi-standardized questions was constructed to serve as the basis for obtaining comparable data by way of the interview technique. These questions elicited meaningful responses when they were tested on eight parents in the Edmonton area.

A table of random numbers was used to choose the sample for this study. The answer sheets from "A Study of the Vocational Aspirations of Alberta Youth" sponsored by

the Provincial Department of Education⁸ served as the basis for selection. This investigation included the entire population of the grade eleven students in Vulcan County in the school year 1964-65. The population was divided into two categories, farm-residing students and non-farm-residing students, and sixty per cent of each group was selected randomly. The interviewing was confined to one parent of each student in the sample.

For purposes of analysis, the information obtained was summarized in point form and then quantified in order to obtain the frequencies of responses and the percentage each was of the total number. The numbers in the sub-groups were not sufficiently large to warrant the use of the chi-square test of significant difference. In addition to quantification, a limited amount of documentation was used to supplement the tabulated data.

VII. OVERVIEW

Chapter Two is devoted to a review of the literature related to the topic under consideration.

Chapter Three described in detail the methods used in selecting the sample, in obtaining the information, and in analyzing the data.

⁸Donald Fair, "The Vocational Aspirations of Alberta Youth", (Edmonton: Study sponsored by the Department of Education, 1965.)

Chapter Four consists of a detailed analysis of the data followed by a summary of the findings.

Chapter Five summarizes the study and presents conclusions and implications.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Systematic utilization of the interview technique to poll public opinion regarding educational matters is a recent practice. Politicians and industrialists made use of this device for some time before educators recognized its possibilities. In 1935 George Gallup founded the American Institute of Public Opinion at Princeton, New Jersey. This institute was intended to be a fact-finding organization to measure and report public opinion on political and social questions. American educators did not begin to make use of this device until 1939. It would appear that this technique has not been widely used on a systematic basis in either the United States or Canada, for the amount of literature related to public attitudes regarding education is limited.

With the exception of one study, the literature reported here relating to public perceptions of the school program indicates that investigations of this topic have not been conducted independently, but as parts of larger studies. As a result, the findings tended to be somewhat superficial.

In this presentation the Canadian studies have been separated from the American studies. Since all of the Canadian studies reported here were done in Alberta, this division enabled the investigator to present a cohesive picture of the status of research on this topic in that province.

I. AMERICAN STUDIES

In 1940 the American Institute of Public Opinion completed a study called "What People Think about Youth and Education."¹ The interview technique was used to obtain information from a random sample of the total adult population in the United States. The following were the major findings of this study:

1. The American public had a generally favorable attitude toward the present-day program of public education.
2. The public believed that the schools should offer equal educational opportunities to all youth.
- 3.. The public favored a special program for unemployed youth who were not in school.
4. The public believed in freedom to discuss controversial issues in the public school.

This study is significant in that it involved the first effort to gain a national poll on public opinion regarding education. The validity of the findings was strengthened by the random nature of the sample and the employment of trained interviewers to gather data. The findings indicated, in a general way, the public attitude toward the school program in the United States just prior to World War Two. The

¹"What People Think about Youth and Education", National Education Association Research Bulletin, XVIII (November, 1940), pp. 187-219.

war set in motion a chain of events which were to have a tremendous impact on education on this continent. In spite of these happenings, the attitudes of the pre-war public on the issues tested did not differ greatly from current attitudes toward these issues.

In 1944 the National Opinion Research Center completed a study entitled The Public Looks at Education.² The interview technique was used to gather data from a stratified sample of the American population twenty-one years of age and over. This study served two major purposes: (1) It revealed nation-wide attitudes regarding American public schools and their problems. (2) It exposed areas of ignorance and misinformation regarding education in the United States.

When asked to name the most important thing pupils should get from their public school education, equal numbers of Americans rated academic subjects and character education of first importance. Vocational training, citizenship education, and experience in making social adjustments followed in that order.

When asked specifically to suggest changes in the public schools, more than half (57 per cent) of the American public suggested no changes. Those who indicated that they

²National Opinion Research Center, The Public Looks At Education, Report 21, (Washington: August, 1944.)

desired changes made the following suggestions:

1. Changes in the curriculum and teaching methods.
2. Changes in the administrative organization and the physical equipment in the schools.
3. Greater emphasis on character and citizenship education.
4. The employment of better qualified teachers.

It is interesting to note that most of these changes related to the school program.

This investigation would appear to be valid, for the individual questions were carefully pre-tested, trained interviewers were employed, and the population sample was representative, within a small degree of error, of the adult population of the United States. This study provided a picture of the public attitude toward education during World War II which serves as a basis for comparison with peace-time attitudes.

In 1948 Harold C. Hand, professor of education at the University of Illinois, published a book entitled What People Think about Their Schools.³ This book dealt with methods of public opinion polling, as applied to school systems, and the relative values of various methods. While this book was not a report of research, it contained much valuable information to provide a background for the current study. It

³Harold C. Hand, What People Think about Their Schools, (New York: The World Book Company, 1948.)

discussed clearly and concisely the value of the kind of research undertaken in this study and gave valuable details on how to obtain a sample, conduct surveys, and how to analyze, report, and use the findings.

This study also would appear to be of particular value to those wishing to poll information regarding education through the use of a questionnaire, for it gives examples of inventories of parent opinion, teacher opinion, and pupil opinion, and also discusses the rationale behind the components of these inventories. These inventories were constructed by experts and carefully pre-tested through city-wide polls.

In 1953 Lindel completed a survey which is reported under the title "What's Right With Them."⁴ The purpose of this study was to determine what aspects of the American school system were approved by the parents of the students in the St. Louis school system. Meetings of nineteen parent organizations associated with eighteen St. Louis schools were attended by the investigator. The parents attending these meetings were requested to indicate the items they believed to be right with the American public schools. The 490 respondents listed 1447 items which were later classified into eighty-nine categories. The most frequently approved items

⁴Albert L. Lindel, "What's Right With Them", Phi Delta Kappan, (XXXIV, June, 1953), pp. 403-405

in the order in which they were ranked were the following:

1. Good teachers.
2. Modern curriculum and methods.
3. The use of teaching methods which develop good citizens.

The validity of this study may be questioned, for the technique was rather haphazard, and it is highly questionable whether the opinions of parents who attended parent meetings were representative of the opinions of the general population of the parents of the St. Louis students. This study, however, was of considerable interest to the investigator, for it was one of the two available studies in which opinions regarding education were obtained from a sample consisting entirely of parents of students.

In a 1957 issue of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, Hines and Grobman presented an article entitled "What Parents Think about Their Schools and What They Know about Them."⁵ This article is a report of a study carried on as part of the C.P.E.A. Project at the University of Florida. The purpose of this project was to describe how principals work with others--parents, teachers, and pupils, and how variations in these working patterns

⁵Vynce A. Hines and Hulda G. Grobman, "What Parents Think about Their Schools and What They Know about Them", National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, (February, 1957), pp. 15-25.

have different consequences in such phases of school operations as attitudes of parents, human relations among pupils and teachers, teaching methods, program development within the school, and pupil achievement. The sample consisted of six thousand parents of elementary school pupils in a large Florida County.

The following findings illustrate the aspects of the educational system about which the majority of parents appeared to be poorly informed:

1. Philosophy of the school.
2. Local achievement in relation to national achievement.
3. Programs for mental and physical health.
4. Curriculum flexibility.
5. Provision for exceptional and handicapped children.
6. The selection and rating of teachers.

The reactions of parents to specific questions regarding their opinions about the schools indicated a generally favorable attitude. Most school patrons indicated their approval of the total school program, homework assigned, disciplinary procedures, and teaching methods.

The defensibility of this study is impossible to judge, for the report does not indicate how the sample was chosen or by what techniques the information was acquired.

In 1959 Downey⁶ completed a study dealing with public perceptions of the tasks of education. This study had two broad purposes: (1) to identify the elements of the task of public education, and (2) to determine the extent to which the public perceived these elements to be important aspects of the task of the public school and to discover the bases of differences in public opinion regarding the relative importance of the various task elements.

A purposive or representative sample was selected from four regions in the United States and Alberta. This sample consisted of 1286 educators and 2544 non-educators from both the elementary and the high school level.

Previous statements of aims were synthesized, and an inventory consisting of sixteen task elements was designed. The participants ranked these items in the order in which they perceived them to be the task of the public school. The major findings were as follows:

1. The respondents were in strong agreement regarding the intellectual elements as the most important tasks of the public school and the productive aspects as the least important.
2. Geographic region appeared to be a determiner of educational viewpoint.

⁶Lawrence W. Downey, The Task of Public Education, (Chicago: The Midwest Administration Center, 1960.)

3. Occupation and amount of schooling were the best predictors of educational belief. The greater the amount of schooling and the higher the occupational rating, the more likely the individual was to favor intellectual development.
4. Age, race, and religion were less reliable predictors of educational belief.
5. Community type, income, sex, and proximity-to-school did not prove to be variables closely associated with educational viewpoint.

This would appear to be a systematic and thorough study, and, furthermore, it may be considered to be in the nature of an innovation in education research, for researchers have typically regarded the task of education, because of its philosophical nature, to be outside their domain.

In 1961 Hartrick at the University of Chicago completed a study entitled "Perceptions of the Public High School Task and Program."⁷ This study was in the nature of a follow-up to the previous study carried out by Downey. Downey found that despite the existence of significant differences in the perceptions of the task of the high school held by various sub-publics, there was generally a high degree of consensus. The purpose of Hartrick's study was to determine whether the responses of the sub-publics would reveal less agreement at the level of procedural expectations than at the level of task expectations.

⁷Walter J. Hartrick, "Perceptions of the High School Task and Program", (Doctoral Thesis, The University of Chicago, Chicago: 1962), (Micro-filmed.)

The instrument employed was an adaptation of Downey's T.P.E. Opinionnaire. To relate procedural expectations to task expectations, one reject statement and three statements describing appropriate alternative procedural means were added to each of the sixteen task elements. The respondents were requested not only to rank the various task elements but also to choose for each the general procedural method which they believed best suited to the purposes of task realization.

The sample included educators, non-educators, and high school students from three differentiated school districts in St. Louis County, Missouri.

The following were the major findings of this study:

1. Educators and non-educators visualized the high school program in similar fashion, for both tended to hold established procedures as procedural expectations for it.
2. Expectations varied with the composition of the sub-publics, and on the basis of the respondent's educational or occupational level, it was possible to predict with some degree of accuracy his perception of the task and program of the high school.
3. Differences in perceptions of the task and program of the high school reflected respondents' views of the different needs of youth.
4. Both educators and non-educators perceived the need for the school to undertake some responsibility for the development of social skills.
5. Both educators and non-educators regarded the primary task of the school to be intellectual development, with particular emphasis on learning skills.

6. Neither educators nor non-educators rejected any task element, and, hence, both sub-publics would appear to regard the task of the high school to be a comprehensive one, emphasizing, in particular, the intellectual aspects.
7. Both sub-publics perceived the school to be vocational in nature in that all courses prepare a student for further education or a career.
8. The high school students tended to de-emphasize all things intellectual, emphasize all things social, and reject vocational training.
9. Generally, the controversy with respect to education appeared to dissipate at the program level as it did at the task level.
10. Since there was such agreement between educators and non-educators regarding the tasks and programs of the high school, reasons for public criticism of education may be due to their perceptions of the results of the school program.

This was, indeed, a very systematic and thorough study, but, like the previous study, its validity may have been weakened by the non-random nature of the sample.

II. CANADIAN STUDIES

In 1957 Brimacombe⁸ completed a master's thesis which involved the construction of a scale to measure adult attitudes toward the educational system of Alberta and the testing of this scale on a sampling of the Alberta public.

⁸Arthur K. Brimacombe, "The Construction of a Scale To Measure Adult Attitude toward the Alberta Educational System", (Unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1957.)

The main purpose of the study was to provide data for the construction of the attitude scale. The scale was divided into five main parts dealing with the following aspects of education: the value of general education, discipline, teacher efficiency, curriculum, and costs. It was administered to 2,500 adults selected on the basis of teachers' recommendations.

The following is a summary of the findings which related to the current study:

1. Women were found to have a more favorable attitude than men toward Alberta's education system.
2. No significant difference in attitudes was found to exist among persons living in cities, towns, villages, or rural areas.
3. Increasing amounts of formal education was related to increasingly less favorable attitudes toward the Alberta education system.
4. Changes in curriculum and teaching methods were requested by almost half of the respondents.

The validity of the latter findings may be questioned. First of all, the sample was likely biased, for it was selected by teachers, and a group thus chosen might tend to be more favorably disposed toward education than the general public. Secondly, the number of returns was so small that it did not warrant generalization from them.

The most comprehensive inquiry into education in the province of Alberta is contained in the Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta.⁹ The purpose of this investigation was to assess the present system of education and to formulate recommendations for the future. The investigation was conducted by a commission consisting of six members, representing different parts of Alberta and different occupations and professions.

During 1958 the commission heard six hundred persons present 189 briefs and propose five thousand recommendations. Under its auspices six major research projects and a number of minor studies were conducted. The final report contained a majority presentation and a minority submission.

Only the parts of this investigation which related to the current study will be discussed here. The following is a summary of the major recommendations relating to the school program:

1. That the scope of the educational offering be broadened to include appropriate vocational courses.
2. That such progress be achieved through the development of community colleges.
3. That a minimum of ten years of education be held desirable for those students who by ability or disposition are not likely to proceed further.

⁹Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta, (Edmonton: The Queen's Printer, 1959), pp. 85-89.

4. That terminal programs be devised for pupils in the above category.
5. That the compulsory core of the high school program consist of English, social studies, science, and mathematics.
6. That, in addition to the above, more intensive three-year programs be developed in accredited schools in all fields of study--including matriculation, fine arts, physical education, business education, and a variety of other programs leading to post-secondary education, or of a terminal, vocational, or general nature.
7. That in grades eleven and twelve at least one major area of each student's program be studied intensively so as to develop his fullest capacity in that area.
8. That appropriate computational and communication skills be emphasized in all programs.
9. That the minimum instruction time be raised from the present 175 minutes to 225 minutes per week per five-credit course.
10. That compulsory religious instruction be rejected and that more intensive use be made of the present pertinent provisions.

The dissenting commissioner in his "Minority Report" expressed agreement with the recommendation that all children should have equal opportunity to develop their abilities to the fullest capacity, but he disagreed with the other commissioners on how this goal was to be realized. He pointed out that this does not mean that a diversity of educational programs should be provided by the school. He stated that all students should have an opportunity to take the academic

program, and that, by and large, this is what parents want for their children.¹⁰

It is impossible to know if these recommendations represented the thinking of the people of Alberta, for apart from one study which covered the opinions of forty-one manufacturers on technical and trades training, no further systematic effort was employed to poll public opinion regarding the school program.

In 1960 Menear¹¹ completed a study dealing with the relationship between parental opinion and pupil achievement. The purpose of this study was to devise criteria which could be used to identify favorable and critical groups of parents with respect to their attitudes toward education.

The sample was chosen from three urban school districts in the Edmonton area whose residents were considered to be of different socio-economic backgrounds. It was selected by the teachers of the grades two, four, and six pupils in these areas. Equal numbers of low, mid-range, and high achievers were chosen. Data were obtained through the use of a rating scale which was administered personally by the researcher and which was supplemented through the use of the unstructured

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 135-139.

¹¹D. W. Menear, "Parent Opinion and Pupil Achievement," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1960.)

interview technique. The data were correlated with the school achievement of the pupils whose parents were interviewed to determine whether parental opinion and pupil achievement were related.

The following were the major findings of this study:

1. Low achievement was found to be associated with critical or indifferent attitudes of parents toward local classrooms.
2. Parents of the highest achievers gave only mediocre ratings to the local classes.
3. Most favorable ratings came from the parents of children achieving in the average to slightly above range.
4. With the exception of one item relating to the rating of the child's classes, parental responses grouped by class, school, occupation, and education of parents were not significantly different.

The validity of the findings may be questioned, for the stratified sample was not chosen on a random basis and the use of the unstructured interview technique to gather such information is a dubious procedure.

The Canadian phase of the data-gathering process for Downey's study of parental perceptions of the tasks of public education occurred at a time when the Cameron Commission was exploring ways and means of obtaining a systematic expression of public sentiment regarding Alberta's educational system. The technique employed by Downey appealed to

the Commissioners, and they arranged for Andrews¹² of the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta to conduct the investigation. In some respects, however, the Alberta study differed from the one carried on in the United States. The investigation was extended to measure not only public perceptions of what the tasks of education ought to be but also educators' perceptions of what the tasks were in actual practice.

In general, the results of the Alberta study tended to substantiate the findings of the study carried on in the United States. Several interesting findings emerged when the opinions of various public and professional groups regarding the tasks of public education were compared with current practices:

1. School superintendents and professors were in unanimous agreement with the relative importance of the task elements currently employed in the schools.
2. The general public indicated a strong desire to see both the elementary and high schools increase their emphasis upon the practical, vocational elements at the expense of the cultural, civic, and intellectual.
3. University professors, other than professors of education, emphasized the need for increased emphasis upon the cultural and academic, at the

¹²John H. Andrews, "The Tasks of the Alberta Schools: Public and Professional Opinion, (Edmonton: The University of Alberta, 1960). (Microfilmed.)

expense of patriotism and the non-intellectual aspects of personal development.

The Andrews Study was of value in the current investigation, for it made possible comparisons between the values reflected in that study and current views of the values of the school program.

In 1962 Bride¹³ completed a study of public attitudes towards schools in Lethbridge School Division No. 7. The purpose of this study was to obtain the attitudes of parents, teachers, and students regarding their satisfaction with the job the high school was doing. The three opinionnaires designed for use in this survey were based on the inventories developed by Hand and associates. A stratified random sample was chosen consisting of grades ten, eleven and twelve pupils in that area and their parents. An opinionnaire also was administered to all the high school teachers in that division.

For the purposes of this review, only the parts of this study which related to the school program will be discussed. Perceptions of three important responsibilities concerning curriculum, as defined by the Alberta School Act, were investigated, namely: (1) adequacy of course offerings

¹³Kenneth W. Bride, "Public Attitudes Toward Schools in Lethbridge School Division No. 7, (Unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton: 1962.)

locally, (2) treatment of subject matter in the classroom, and (3) citizenship development. The following is a summary of the major findings relating to these responsibilities:

1. In general, the respondents felt that the teaching methods employed were fairly satisfactory.
2. The various groups thought that there was no serious deficiency in the availability of courses, but a sizable portion suggested the addition of courses of a technical, commercial, and fine arts nature.
3. All groups thought that the schools did a satisfactory job of teaching citizenship, but the teachers were less pleased than the others with the job being done in this particular area.

This would appear to be a sound study, for the most effective sampling techniques were used and adequate measures were taken to determine the validity and reliability of the instruments. The findings relating to curriculum, however, were too general in nature to be very revealing.

III. CONCLUSION

In general, this review of the related literature indicated that the amount of research relating to public perceptions of the school program is limited. A lack of time and money made it difficult for many of the investigators to use the most effective sampling techniques. Since most of the research relating to public perceptions of the school

program was carried on within the framework of larger studies the findings tended to be brief and superficial. They did, however, provide bases for comparison between current and previous values.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

I. THE PILOT STUDY

The original plan for this investigation was to administer a questionnaire to a representative sample of subgroups in various regions of the province of Alberta. An instrument was developed consisting of a series of cases designed to focus thinking on the various types of placement problems faced by the high school. After reading each case the respondents were asked to react to these two questions: (1) In what program would you place this student? (2) The school placed him in this program. (A program was specified for each case.) Do you agree or disagree with the school's decision? State reasons for your response. The first question was closed in nature, for the respondents were given a list of all the different types of programs from which they were to make their choice. The second question was open-ended. This and all further revisions failed to elicit significant information when it was tried out on a pilot group made up of fourteen parents and teachers.

The questionnaires were administered by the investigator. In each case a follow-up interview was conducted in order to get the respondents to elaborate on their responses to items in the questionnaire. The purpose of this procedure

was to determine to what extent the participants were able to express opinions on matters relating to the school program. The pilot study proved to be valuable in that it revealed the kinds of questions to which parents would respond and the kinds of information they were able to supply. On the basis of this study it was decided that, because of the difficulty parents had in interpreting questions and in expressing themselves and because of the difficulty the investigator had in interpreting the information they provided, the most effective technique which could be used to gather data was that of the personal interview.

II. THE SAMPLE

Since the interview technique is so expensive and time-consuming, this study was limited to one county. The county of Vulcan was chosen for the following reasons:

1. Because it has a convenient distribution of farm and non-farm residents.
2. Because the population of the parents of the grade eleven students was sufficiently small to permit the use of the interview technique.
3. Because the majority of the parents could be expected to have some familiarity with non-matriculation programs as well as matriculation, since the main high school serving the county offered a highly diversified program.

The sample was limited to parents because they were more likely to be concerned about education than non-parents and could be expected to have more opinions on the matter because of their familiarity with the school experiences of their children. The sample was drawn from the parents of the grade eleven students because it was felt that by the time their children had two years experience in high school, parents would have had ample opportunity to form opinions regarding the high school program, and, furthermore, a sample chosen at the grade eleven level probably would include more parents of students of a wider range of academic interest and achievement than would a sample chosen from the grade twelves.

The sample was drawn from the total population of the grade eleven students in Vulcan County in the latter half of the school year 1964-1965. The answer sheets from the Department of Education's study¹ of the "Vocational Aspirations of Alberta Youth" served as the basis for selection. The total population, according to this study, consisted of one hundred students. To get an equal distribution of farm and non-farm population, the answer sheets were divided into two groups: Those of farm-residing students and those of non-farm-residing students. Of the total population of students, fifty-five

¹Dr. Donald Fair, "The Vocational Aspirations of Alberta Youth", (Edmonton: Study sponsored by the Department of Education, 1965.)

were farm residents and forty-five were non-farm residents. A sample consisting of sixty percent of each group was chosen through the use of a table of random numbers. The total sample of sixty was made up of thirty-three farm-residing students and twenty-seven non-farm-residing students. The drawing procedure was continued in order to gain randomly an additional thirty per cent of each group to provide substitutes for parents from the original sample who were unavailable for interviewing. The interviewing was confined to one parent of each student in the sample.

III. THE INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

A series of semi-standardized questions was constructed to serve as the basis for obtaining comparable information by way of the interview technique. Several opening questions were devised to put the interviewees at their ease and to find out how knowledgeable they were regarding educational matters. The opening questions were the following:

1. What program is your son (or daughter) taking?
2. What other programs were available?
3. Do you have much contact with the school?
4. How much information does the school give you regarding its program?

The following were the questions which formed the main body of the interview:

1. How did he (she) get into this program?
2. How much say did you have in deciding what program he (she) would take?
3. What program did you want him (her) to take?
4. Is he (she) able to get the kind of program you want for him (her) in this particular area?
5. If he (she) were starting high school all over again, what program would you want him (her) to take?
6. For what reasons are you satisfied with the program he (she) is taking?
7. For what reasons are you dissatisfied with the program he (she) is taking?
8. How satisfied are you with the program he (she) is taking? Rate according to the following scale.

Not at all, Poorly, Fairly, Well, Very Well

1 2 3 4 5

9. What do you consider to be the greatest obstacle to his (her) progress in the program he (she) is taking?
10. Do you think that a student should receive job training in high school or should this be provided in another institution after he (she) leaves school?
11. Do you think that boys and girls should have different programs?

All questions except number eight were open-ended in nature. In the case of question five, parents were encouraged to reflect on the values underlying their choice. In the case of questions six, seven, ten, and eleven, parents were encouraged to react to each of them in general and then to follow up the leads given by their opening statements. In the case of question nine, parents were encouraged to discuss the reasons behind their choice of obstacle. For the most part, the other questions did not require further elaboration, but explanation of terminology was necessary in some cases.

The questions were tried on eight parents in the Edmonton area, and it was found that they elicited meaningful information. Prior to the interviews, letters were sent to the parents by the Superintendent of Schools for Vulcan County indicating that they would be contacted by the investigator to discuss the school program and requesting their cooperation.

The information was recorded during the course of each interview. A record form² was devised providing appropriate spaces for recording background information and answers to questions. Immediately after each interview, pertinent observations were recorded, and the answers were checked to see that they were complete.

²A sample of the record form is included in the Appendix.

IV. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

For the purposes of analysis, the information on the record sheets was summarized in point form and then quantified in order to obtain the frequencies of responses and the percentage each was of the total number. The information was then recorded in the form of appropriate tables.

The numbers in the sub-groups were not sufficiently large to warrant the use of the chi-square test of significant difference, so comparisons had to be made on the bases of frequencies and percentages. Medians were calculated for the results obtained from the question dealing with the rating of program satisfaction. A limited amount of documentation was used to reveal significant trends and interrelationships.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

I. INTRODUCTION

This investigation examined parental perceptions of the high school curricular program in Vulcan County. The sample consisted of sixty per cent of the total population of the parents of the grade eleven students in the academic year 1964-1965. The interview technique, based on a series of semi-standardized questions, was used to gather data.

The responses were recorded during the course of each interview on record forms designed for this purpose. The data were then summarized in point form and quantified to get the frequency of responses for each item and the percentage each was of the total number.

In the statement of the problem, the questions were grouped under appropriate headings. In the report of the findings, each of these headings will serve as a major subdivision of the chapter. Because of the large number of questions examined in this study and the lengthy nature of some of the data, such treatment should make for a clearer presentation of the findings. The chapter will end with a general summary of the findings.

I. KINDS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS DESIRED BY PARENTS

The questions designed to indicate the kinds of educational programs desired by the parents were the following:

- A. What kinds of educational programs do parents want for their children in grade eleven?
- B. Do parents consider vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school?
- C. Do parents who consider vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school want it for their own children?
- D. What reasons do parents state for considering vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school?
- E. What reasons do parents state for not considering vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school?
- F. Do parents think that boys and girls should have different programs?
- G. For what reasons do parents want similar programs for boys and girls?
- H. For what reasons do parents want different programs for boys and girls?

The data pertaining to these questions will be organized under appropriate sub-headings.

Programs Wanted by Parents

The data relating to the question dealing with the kinds of educational programs parents wanted for their children in grade eleven are presented in Table I. In this table the data

are analyzed according to the factors of residency and sex of offspring along with a summary of the frequencies and percentages for the total sample of parents. The demand for the matriculation program was consistently high among all categories of parents. The total demand for the matriculation program was eighty-eight per cent whereas the total demand for the non-matriculation programs was only twelve per cent. Obviously, the great majority of the parents wanted their children in the matriculation program.

TABLE I

KINDS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS PARENTS WANTED
FOR THEIR CHILDREN IN GRADE ELEVEN

Category of Parents	Matriculation		Non-matriculation	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Farm-residing Parents	30	91	3	9
Non-farm-residing Parents	23	85	4	15
Parents of Boys	23	88	3	12
Parents of Girls	30	88	4	12
Totals for All Parents	53	88	7	12

Parental Views on Vocational Education as a Task of the High School

In order to present clearly parental views on vocational education as a task of the high school, it is necessary to indicate (1) the extent to which they thought the high school should offer this kind of education, (2) the students for whom they believed it should be offered, and (3) the kinds of vocational education or training which they thought should be employed. This information is presented in Table II, on page 46 and Table III, page 49. A question which became obvious as a result of reviewing the findings relating to the above issues was the following: Did the parents who regarded vocational education or training to be a task of the high school want it for their own children? This question will be treated immediately following the first three issues. The discussion relating to vocational education will end with a presentation of the reasons why parents did or did not think that the high schools should offer vocational education or training.

The findings in Table II indicate that approximately half of the parents (48 per cent) did not regard vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school. The other half of the parent sample thought that the high schools should offer vocational education or training to all or part of the student body. With regard to those parents

TABLE 11

EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS REGARDED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OR
TRAINING TO BE PART OF THE JOB OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

CATEGORIES OF PARENTS	YES, FOR ALL STUDENTS		YES, FOR THOSE NOT ABLE TO GET MATRICULATION		YES, FOR NON- MATRICULANTS WHO ARE INTERESTED		NO OPINION	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PARENTS OF MATRICULANTS	20	51	3	8	11	28	4	10
PARENTS OF NON- MATRICULANTS	9	43			4	19	8	38
FARM-RESIDING PARENTS	18	55	1	3	6	18	8	24
NON-FARM-RE- SIDING PARENTS	11	41	2	7	9	33	4	15
PARENTS OF GIRLS	15	44	2	6	9	27	7	21
PARENTS OF BOYS	14	54	1	4	6	23	5	19
TOTALS FOR ALL PARENTS	29	48	3	5	15	25	12	20
							1	2

who did not consider vocational education to be part of the task of the high school, there was little difference in the percentages of responses among their sub-categories when their opinions were classified according to place of residence, program placement, and sex of offspring.

Very few parents in any sub-category indicated a desire for the high schools to offer vocational education or training for all students. Only five per cent of the parent body indicated that they thought that the high schools should offer some kind of vocational education or training for all students; twenty-five per cent indicated that some kind of vocational education or training should be offered to students unable to take the matriculation program, and twenty per cent indicated a desire to have the schools offer vocational education or training for non-matriculants who are interested in it. Thus the majority of the parents who regarded vocational education or training to be a task of the high school wanted it confined either to students unable to take matriculation or to interested non-matriculants.

Table III indicates the kinds of vocational education or training parents thought the high schools should offer. Half of the total sample of parents thought that the high schools should offer some form of vocational education or training, and of this half, forty-three per cent indicated that they desired the high schools to offer exploratory vocational courses, and seven per cent indicated that they desired

the high school to offer vocational training for a specific job. There was little divergence among the percentages of responses for the sub-categories of parents regarding their views on the kinds of vocational education or training to be offered by the high schools. From these findings it is apparent that very few parents considered vocational training for a specific job to be a task of the high school. The majority of the parents who regarded vocational education to be a task of the high school wanted the vocational courses to be of an exploratory nature to form a part of the general education of the student.

In looking back over the data relating to parental views of vocational education as a task of the high school, an obvious question arose: Did the parents who regarded vocational education or training to be a task of the high school want it for their own children? To determine the answer to this question, the data were re-examined to see in what programs parents who regarded vocational education as a task of the high school wanted their own children placed.

The results revealed that of the 30 parents in this category, 23 or 77 per cent of them wanted their children to take the matriculation program and 7 or 23 per cent of them desired their children to have non-matriculation programs. These statistics make it apparent a large majority of the

TABLE III

KINDS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OR TRAINING
PARENTS THOUGHT SCHOOLS SHOULD OFFER

Category of Parent	Exploratory Vocational Courses		Vocational Training for a Specific Job	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Parents of Matriculants	16	41	1	3
Parents of Non-Matriculants	10	48	3	8
Farm-residing Parents	16	48	1	3
Non-farm-residing Parents	10	37	3	11
Parents of Girls	16	47	2	6
Parents of Boys	10	59	2	8
Totals for All Parents	26	43	4	7

parents who regarded vocational education to be a task of the high school did not want it for their own children. Hence, it may be concluded that the actual parental demand for vocational education was small.

Table IV summarizes the reasons why parents thought the high schools should offer vocational education or training under these two categories: (1) reasons why parents wished the high schools to offer exploratory vocational courses, and, (2) reasons why parents wished the high schools to offer vocational training for a specific job. The majority of the reasons given for wishing the high schools to offer vocational courses of an exploratory nature appeared to reflect parental concern to have these courses become an integral part of the general education of the students in order to give them a basic preparation for the world of work. The reasons offered for considering vocational training for a specific job to be a task of the high school were so few that they do not warrant generalization from them.

TABLE IV

SUMMARY OF REASONS WHY PARENTS THOUGHT THE HIGH SCHOOLS
SHOULD OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OR TRAINING

Reasons why parents wished the high schools to offer exploratory vocational courses	Number	Percent
To acquaint students with a variety of jobs and the skills and training they require.....	18	43
Such courses can be combined with academic or general courses to give students a well-rounded education...	11	25
The high school cannot offer the high quality of vocational training necessary for specialization.....	5	11
Specialization might be a waste of time because so many students do not know what kind of training they want.....	4	10
To help students to find out what the world of work is like.....	3	7
Such courses give non-academic students a chance to discover and develop their talents.....	1	2
Provision of such courses would enable more students to complete high school.....	1	3
<hr/>		
Reasons why parents wished the high schools to offer vocation training for a specific job		
Such training would enable students to go directly from high school to the labor force with marketable skills.....	2	50
Such training saves parents' money because they do not have to send their children away for specialized training.....	1	25
Such training gives non-academic students a chance to develop their talents.....	1	25

Table V presents the reasons parents stated for not considering vocational education or training to be a task of the high school. The majority of these reasons appeared to reflect parental concern about having the high schools attend to their main task of offering a good general education for all students. The other reasons reflected concern about the quality of the current vocational courses and the pitfalls involved in offering such courses to young high school students.

TABLE V

SUMMARY OF REASONS WHY PARENTS THOUGHT THE HIGH SCHOOLS
SHOULD NOT OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OR TRAINING

Reasons	Number	Per cent
Interferes with the job of the high school which is to provide a general education for all students.....	22	29
General education is the best preparation for all future job training.	18	24
Students entering high school are not mature enough to know what kind of training they want.....	13	17
The high schools are not able to offer the variety and quality of vocational courses which are offered by vocational and technical schools..	13	17
There is a danger that students will take vocational courses which they will never use.....	6	9
Vocational education does not provide the answer to the problems of the students who are having academic difficulties.....	1	1
Providing vocational education enables the high school to dodge its real problem--improving academic course offerings to make them available to all students.....	1	1
It would be preferable for the high schools to offer practical courses in typing and home economics which have wide applicability.....	1	1

Parental Opinions Regarding Different Programs for Girls and Boys

In order to illustrate parental opinion regarding different programs for boys and girls, it is necessary to indicate the demand for different programs and also the reasons why parents wanted similar or different programs.

Table VI summarizes the findings relating to parental opinion regarding different programs for girls and boys with an analysis of the data according to the factors of place of residency and sex of offspring and a summary for the total sample of parents.

According to these findings, 43 per cent of the parents indicated that they did not desire different programs for boys and girls, 20 per cent of them indicated that they did, and 37 per cent of them stated that they had no opinion on the matter. If it is reasonable to assume that the parents who indicated that they had no opinion on this matter were satisfied with the current system of offering similar programs for girls and boys, then it may be concluded that a large majority of the parents wanted the high schools to offer similar programs for girls and boys.

A review of the evidence indicates that of the 48 parents who did not indicate a desire to have the schools offer different programs for girls and boys, 44 of them (92 per cent) wanted their children to take the matriculation program. Apparently the lack of demand for different programs

TABLE VI

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF PARENTS DESIRING
DIFFERENT PROGRAMS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

	Those desir- ing different programs		Those desir- ing similar programs		No opinion	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Farm-residing Parents	6	18	16	49	11	33
Non-farm-residing Parents	6	22	10	37	11	41
Parents of girls	6	18	15	44	13	38
Parents of boys	6	23	11	42	9	35
Totals for all Parents	12	20	26	43	22	37

for boys and girls reflected parental desire to have both take the matriculation program.

The reasons stated by parents for desiring the high schools to offer similar programs for boys and girls are the following:

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Women and men seek the same higher education and job opportunities and hence need the same education.....	21	73
General education is the best preparation for life, and both sexes profit equally from this.....	4	14
Both sexes have equal ability and hence should have equal educational opportunity.....	3	10
Our society already places too much emphasis on the differences between the sexes.....	1	3

This summary indicates that the great majority of the reasons given by parents who thought boys and girls should have similar programs related to vocational aspirations. It is apparent that the majority of these parents wanted boys and girls to have equal educational and vocational opportunities.

The reasons stated by parents for wanting the high schools to offer different programs for boys and girls were the following:

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
A greater effort should be made to accommodate the separate interests of girls in subjects such as science and mathematics.....	5	42
Girls should have courses in homemaking in addition to the regular program.....	5	42
The physical education program for girls is modelled too closely on that of the boys.....	1	8
Girls should have more subjects of a psychological or sociological nature which will help them to understand people.....	1	8

These findings indicate that none of the reasons given for wanting different programs for boys and girls reflected a desire for major changes in the total program but either changes in particular subjects or the addition of subjects to the current curriculum to accommodate the needs and interests of girls.

II. PARENTAL SATISFACTION WITH PROGRAM PLACEMENT AND PROGRAMS

The questions designed to illustrate parental satisfaction with the placement of their children in specific programs and with the programs which their children were taking were the following:

- A. Are parents program-placement-satisfied?
- B. Do parents who are dissatisfied with the placement of their children in the non-matriculation programs regard vocational education or training to be part of the job of the high school?
- C. To what extent are parents program-satisfied?
- D. For what reasons are parents program-satisfied?
- E. For what reasons are parents program dissatisfied?
- F. What do parents consider to be the greatest program obstacles?
- G. Do parents question the value of the non-matriculation programs offered by the high schools?

The data pertaining to these questions will be organized under appropriate sub-headings.

Program-placement-satisfaction

The data relating to the question dealing with the program-placement-satisfaction of parents are presented in Table VII. According to these findings, all of the parents of matriculation students were program-placement-satisfied whereas the majority of the parents of non-matriculation students (67 per cent) were not. With regard to the sub-categories of parents of non-matriculants, 45 per cent of the non-farm residing parents were program-placement-satisfied whereas only 20 per cent of the farm-residing parents indicated this to be so. There was an even larger discrepancy in the figures for the parents of male and female non-matriculants, for the majority of the parents of girls

(56 per cent) and only a small minority of the parents of boys (17 per cent) indicated that they were program-placement-satisfied. Hence, it would appear that place of residence and sex of offspring were determiners of the viewpoint of parents of non-matriculants regarding program-placement-satisfaction.

Since the majority of the parents of non-matriculants (76 per cent) were program-placement-dissatisfied, and in view of the fact that it is their children who are most likely to be placed in vocational courses, an obvious question that arose was whether or not these parents regarded vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school. A review of the evidence indicated that the majority of this group (76 per cent) did not view vocational education or training to be a task of the high school; 24 per cent of them wished the high school to offer vocational courses of an exploratory nature, and none of them wanted the high school to offer vocational training for a specific job. Thus the demand for vocational training on the part of program-placement-dissatisfied parents of non-matriculants was very small.

This evidence will be supplemented by the following excerpts from several interviews with parents of non-matriculants who were program-placement-dissatisfied. In no case

TABLE VII

EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS WERE PROGRAM-PLACEMENT-SATISFIED

Categories of parents	Matriculation				Non-matriculation			
	Satisfied No.	Dissatisfied %	Satisfied No.	Dissatisfied %	Satisfied No.	Dissatisfied %	Satisfied No.	Dissatisfied %
Farm-re- siding parents	23	100	0	0	2	20	8	80
Non-farm- residing parents	16	100	0	0	5	45	6	55
Parents of girls	25	100	0	0	5	56	4	46
Parents of boys	14	100	0	0	2	17	10	83
Totals for all parents	39	100	0	0	7	33	14	67

will the names of parents or children be mentioned. This evidence provides greater insight into the thinking of these parents.

Case No. 1. My daughter is in the commercial course because there was no alternative but for her to take it. I, myself, am against job training in the school. But what else is there? The matriculation program is so inflexible that it cuts off a large number of average students from taking it. If it were changed, more students might be able to get it.

Case No. 2. Vocational training should not be put on in the high school. It is the job of the high school to give a good general education. The other can come later. I don't think the school can do justice to both. The vocational courses they offer around here "aren't much." My husband is a tradesman, and he knows.

Case No. 3. I am against offering vocational courses in the schools. They aren't able to offer enough courses to meet the needs of the students. My boy is wasting time taking a shop course he'll never use. While his time is taken up with this, he is losing out on general education courses which might better prepare him for a variety of opportunities.

Program Satisfaction

In order to present adequately parental views on program satisfaction, it is necessary to indicate the extent to which parents were program-satisfied, the reasons why they were or were not satisfied, and the factors they considered to be the greatest program obstacles.

In the process of each interview, each parent was asked to rate how satisfied he was with the program his child was taking. The following is the five-point scale on which he was requested to make his rating:

Not at all	Poorly	Fairly	Well	Very Well
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>

When the results were tabulated, in addition to the frequencies and percentages, the median levels of satisfaction¹ were calculated for the various sub-categories of parents, as well as for the total sample.

According to the findings, as they are presented in Table VIII, the parents of matriculants were the most satisfied group with a median level of satisfaction of 3.8, and parents of non-matriculants were the least satisfied group with a median level of satisfaction of 2.2. Comparing the findings on the basis of percentages, 56.4 per cent of the parents of matriculants indicated definite program satisfaction whereas only 23.9 per cent of the parents of non-matriculants were definitely program-satisfied. Only 7 per cent of the parents of matriculants indicated definite program-dissatisfaction whereas 42.8 per cent of the parents of non-matriculants indicated this to be so.

The difference in the median levels of satisfaction between farm-residing-parents (2.7) and non-farm-residing parents (3.1) was not great. However, the majority of the

¹For procedure see Merle W. Tate, Statistics in Education, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1955), pp.86-89.

TABLE VIII

LEVEL OF PARENTAL PROGRAM SATISFACTION

CATEGORIES OF PARENTS	LEVELS OF SATISFACTION									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	No.	%N	No.	%N	No.	%N	No.	%N	No.	%N
PARENTS OF MATRICULANTS	0	0	3	7.0	14	35.9	16	41.0	6	15.4
PARENTS OF NON- MATRICULANTS	2	9.5	7	33.3	7	33.3	5	23.9	0	0
FARM-RESIDING PARENTS	1	3.0	6	18.2	13	39.4	11	33.3	2	6.1
NON-FARM- RESIDING PARENTS	1	3.7	4	14.8	8	29.5	10	37.0	4	14.8
TOTALS FOR ALL PARENTS	2	3.3	10	16.7	21	35.0	21	35.0	6	10.0

* ITEM ABBREVIATED: M.L.S. (MEDIAN LEVEL OF SATISFACTION)

non-farm-residing parents (51.8 per cent) indicated definite program satisfaction whereas only 39.4 per cent of the farm-residing parents indicated this to be so. With regard to the total sample of parents, the median level of program satisfaction was 2.9, indicating a moderate degree of program satisfaction. The parents of non-matriculants were the only sub-group whose median score indicated a definite tendency towards dissatisfaction.

Reasons for Program Satisfaction

For the sake of clarity, the reasons for program satisfaction given by the parents of matriculants will be treated separately from the reasons for program satisfaction given by the parents of non-matriculants.

Table IX presents the reasons for program satisfaction stated by the 39 parents of matriculants. According to these findings, the great majority of the parents of matriculants (97 per cent) related their reasons for program satisfaction to vocational aspirations, with 92 per cent of them indicating that they were program-satisfied because the matriculation program leaves open to students the widest opportunities for further education and choice of careers and five per cent of them indicating that the matriculation program provides the best preparation for farming. All the other reasons, except one, referred to the values of a liberal education. Thus it

TABLE IX

REASONS FOR PROGRAM SATISFACTION STATED
BY PARENTS OF MATRICULANTS

Reasons	Number	Percent
Leaves open to student the widest opportunities for further education and choice of careers.....	36	92
Gives student a broad understanding of himself and others.....	7	18
Gives student a good general education to prepare him for life.....	5	13
Challenges the student's ability.....	5	13
Broadens the student's mind through contact with a variety of areas of knowledge.....	5	13
Teaches student to think for himself.....	5	13
Teaches student to work.....	4	10
Provides the best general preparation for farming.....	2	5
Gives student the good education which his parents were never able to get.....	2	5
Teaches students to understand and appreciate the finer things in life.....	1	3
Helps student to acquire a love for learning.....	1	3
Gives student the background to develop an appreciation of reading and other leisure-time activities.....	1	3
Matriculation program is a source of distinction.....	1	3
Teaches student to appreciate the value of an education.....	1	3

is apparent that almost all of the reasons for program satisfaction stated by the parents of matriculants related either to vocational aspirations or the values of a liberal education.

Table X presents the reasons for program satisfaction stated by the 21 parents of non-matriculants. The majority of the parents of non-matriculants (62 per cent) gave as one of their reasons that the non-matriculation program would enable their child to complete high school, and 43 per cent of them expressed satisfaction with this program because it would enable their children to succeed. Since both of these reasons are closely related, it may be concluded that the majority of the reasons for program satisfaction stated by the parents of non-matriculants related to their concern to have their children succeed in school. The remaining reasons given by 48 per cent of the parents related to the vocational aspirations which they held for their children.

There was little similarity between the reasons for program satisfaction given by parents of matriculants and parents of non-matriculants. Out of the total number of reasons, only these two were stated by both groups of parents: (1) teaches students to work, and (2) gives them a broad understanding of themselves and others. Thus it is apparent

TABLE X

REASONS FOR PROGRAM SATISFACTION STATED
BY PARENTS OF NON-MATRICULANTS

Reasons	Number	Percent
Enables student who is unable to continue in matriculation to complete high school..	13	62
Enables student to succeed.....	9	43
Enables student to qualify for entrance to a trade or technical school.....	6	29
Prepares student for a job.....	4	19
Program revives student's interest in school.....	2	10
Vocational courses provide the skills for future hobbies.....	2	10
Program provides for more activity than the matriculation program.....	1	5
Student is getting value out of subjects of a general nature.....	1	5
Teaches student to work.....	1	5
Enables student to get a general education without taking matriculation.....	1	5
Helps student to acquire self confidence..	1	5
Gives student a better understanding of himself and others.....	1	5

that the two groups of parents do not view the two programs as having similar values.

Reasons for Program-Dissatisfaction

Table XI presents the reasons for program-dissatisfaction given by the parents of matriculants. These reasons have been divided into three categories: (1) Reasons reflecting parental concern for the success of their children in the matriculation program, (2) Reasons reflecting parental concern regarding deficiencies in the quality and variety of courses. (3) Other reasons.

These findings indicate that 60.1 per cent of the total number of reasons reflected parental concern for the success of their children in the matriculation program, 32.3 per cent of them reflected parental concern regarding deficiencies in the quality and variety of courses offered, and 7.6 per cent of them have been classified as other reasons. Thus it may be concluded that most of the reasons given by parents of matriculants either reflected parental concern for the success of their children in the matriculation program or dissatisfaction with the quality and variety of courses offered.

TABLE XI

REASONS FOR PROGRAM DISSATISFACTION STATED
BY PARENTS OF MATRICULANTS

Reasons Reflecting Parental Concern for the Success of Their Children in the Matricu- lation Program	Number	Percent
Program not organized to accommodate individ- ual differences in achievement and ability...	15	12.6
More guidance needed in the proper choice of subjects.....	14	11.7
Lack of provision for remedial work.....	10	8.4
Inflexible matriculation requirements which prevent many average students from complet- ing the program.....	9	7.5
Too much time spent on the frills and not enough on the basic subjects.....	5	4.3
French not introduced early enough in the school program.....	4	3.3
Too much lecturing and not sufficient provis- ion for students to work on their own in the classroom.....	4	3.3
Too much emphasis on examination results.....	3	2.5
Students unable to understand mathematics....	3	2.5
Too much emphasis on preparation for univer- sity.....	1	.8
Disapprove of promoting students on the basis of provincial averages.....	1	.8
Teachers exercise too much authority in mak- ing students drop subjects.....	1	.8
Too much emphasis on the weaknesses of students and not enough on the development of their talents.....	1	.8
Lack of continuity between the grade XXI and XII courses.....	1	.8
Totals	72	60.1
Reasons Reflecting Parental Concern Regard- ing Deficiencies in the Quality and Variety of Courses		
Students unable to take a vocational option in which he is interested.....	11	9.2
Schools do not offer a sufficient variety of science courses.....	6	5.0

TABLE XI (Continued)

Courses do not challenge the ability of the bright students.....	4	3.3
Course content is not sufficiently interesting.....	3	2.5
Lack of sufficient emphasis on oral French...	3	2.5
Not enough lab work in science.....	3	2.5
Lack of sufficient provision of fine arts options.....	3	2.5
Lack of provision for agriculture.....	1	.8
Communication skills not developed adequately through the current English courses.....	1	.8
Need for more emphasis in the program on culture, refinement, and manners.....	1	.8
Not enough emphasis on the practical application of theory.....	1	.8
Use of outmoded content and methodology.....	1	.8
Too much emphasis on ancient history in the social studies program.....	1	.8

Totals	39	32.3
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Other Reasons

Dislike the process of streaming.....	5	4.3
Lack of adequate facilities for teaching the various subjects.....	4	3.3

Totals	9	7.6
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Totals for all categories	120	100.0
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Table XII presents the reasons for program dissatisfaction stated by the parents of non-matriculants. These reasons fall into three categories: (1) reasons reflecting program-placement dissatisfaction, (2) reasons relating to deficiencies in the quality and variety of courses offered, and (3) other reasons.

The findings in Table XII indicate that 68.5 per cent of the reasons did not reflect program dissatisfaction but program-placement dissatisfaction; 18.8 per cent of the reasons reflected deficiencies in the quality and variety of courses offered, and 12.4 per cent of them have been classified as other reasons. The conclusion which may be drawn from these findings is that the majority of the reasons for program dissatisfaction given by the parents of non-matriculation students were not reasons for program dissatisfaction but reasons for program-placement dissatisfaction. This is understandable in the light of the great demand for the matriculation program on the part of parents.

With regard to the reasons for program dissatisfaction stated by both groups of parents, the majority of those given by parents of matriculants reflected their concern for the success of their children in the matriculation program whereas most of those stated by parents of non-matriculants

TABLE XII

REASONS FOR PROGRAM DISSATISFACTION STATED
BY PARENTS OF NON-MATRICULANTS

Reasons Reflecting Program-Placement-Dissatisfaction	Number	Percent
Inflexible matriculation requirements which prohibit many students of average ability from gaining matriculation.....	14	17.4
Student not placed in the program which parents want for him.....	11	13.6
Against the idea of streaming.....	9	11.2
Lack of sufficient opportunity for remedial work--one of the main reasons why students have to drop subjects.....	8	10.0
Program not organized to accommodate individual differences in achievement and ability.....	8	10.0
Student is wasting time taking vocational courses which he will never use.....	1	1.3
Parent questions the value of the general course subjects since they do not count in the academic program.....	1	1.3
General courses do not challenge the student's ability.....	1	1.3
Would like general course students to be able to continue in the academic subjects in which they are strong.....	1	1.3
Students who have the qualities to succeed in careers such as nursing are cut off because they are not able to matriculate..	1	1.3
Totals	55	68.7
Reasons reflecting deficiencies in the quality and variety of courses		
Vocational subjects are of poor quality.	3	3.7

TABLE XII (Continued)

Course content is not sufficiently interesting.....	3	3.7
Lack of sufficient provision of fine arts options.....	2	2.5
Lack of sufficient emphasis on culture, refinement, and manners.....	2	2.5
Communications skills not adequately developed through the English program.....	2	2.5
Use of outmoded content and methodology.	1	1.3
Home economics course unnecessary in that it teaches skills that can be taught in the home.....	1	1.3
Too much emphasis on frills and not enough on the basic subjects.....	1	1.3
Totals	15	18.8
Other Reasons		
Too much stress on the weaknesses of students and not sufficient efforts to develop their talents.....	4	5.0
More guidance needed in the proper choice of subjects.....	3	3.7
Too much lecturing and not sufficient opportunity for students to work on their own in the classroom.....	3	3.7
Totals	10	12.4
Totals for all categories	80	100.0

reflected program-placement-dissatisfaction rather than program dissatisfaction. Three of the reasons given by both groups of parents reflecting their major concerns were the same. These reasons and the percentages of them given by both groups of parents are as follows:

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Parents of Matriculants</u> Per cent	<u>Parents of non- Matriculants</u> Per cent
Program not organized to accommodate individual differences in achievement and ability.....	13	10
Lack of remedial work in the subjects in which students are weak.....	8	10
Inflexible matriculation requirements which prohibit many students of average ability from gaining matriculation.....	7	17
Totals.....	28	37

These findings indicate that 28 per cent of the reasons given by parents of matriculants reflecting their concern for the success of their children in the matriculation program were the same as 37 per cent of the reasons given by parents of non-matriculants reflecting program-placement dissatisfaction.

Four of the reasons given by both groups of parents reflecting their concern for the quality and variety of courses offered were the same, but they made up only a

small percentage of the total number of responses. Thus it may be concluded that the similarity between the reasons for program dissatisfaction given by parents of matriculants and parents of non-matriculants was small.

Parental Opinion Regarding Program Obstacles

Each parent was asked to give the one factor which he regarded to be the greatest obstacle to the progress of his child in the program he was taking. Table XIII summarizes the findings relating to this question for the total sample of parents and for parents of matriculants and parents of non-matriculants. The obstacle most frequently stated by both groups of parents were the quality of teachers and the student's own lack of effort. These two reasons were given by 40.8 per cent of the parents of matriculants, and by 67 per cent of the parents of non-matriculants, to account for the reasons stated by 50 per cent of the total sample of parents. The only other reason which received fairly frequent mention from both groups of parents (11.6 per cent of the total) was long bus runs.

The 60 parents who constituted the total sample gave a total of 14 different obstacles, and of these, three were mentioned by both groups of parents. In spite of the wide diversity of responses, the majority of the parents (61.6 per cent) regarded these three factors to be the greatest

TABLE XIII
SUMMARY OF FACTORS PARENTS REGARDED AS THE GREATEST PROGRAM OBSTACLES

OBSTACLES	PARENTS OF MATRICULANTS		PARENTS OF NON-MATRICULANTS		TOTALS FOR ALL PARENTS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
QUALITY OF TEACHERS.....	9	23.1	8	38.1	17	28.3
STUDENT'S OWN LACK OF EFFORT.....	7	17.7	6	28.5	13	21.7
NO MAJOR OBSTACLE.....	8	20.5			8	13.2
LONG BUS RUNS.....	6	15.4	1	4.8	7	11.6
LACK OF ORGANIZATION OF PROGRAM TO ACCOMMODATE IN-VISUAL DIFFERENCES IN ACHIEVEMENT AND ABILITY.....	4	10.3			4	6.7
COURSES DO NOT CHALLENGE THE ABILITY OF THE BRIGHT STUDENT.....	2	5.2			2	3.3
LACK OF OPPORTUNITY FOR REMEDIAL WORK.....			2	9.5	2	3.3
LACK OF PROPER FACILITIES FOR INSTRUCTION IN SMALL SCHOOLS.....	1	2.6			1	1.7
LACK OF DISCIPLINE.....	1	2.6			1	1.7
OVEREMPHASIS ON PREPARATION FOR FINAL EXAMINATIONS..	1	2.6			1	1.7
STUDENT NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE THE PROGRAM HE WANTS.....	1	2.6	1	4.8	1	1.7
POOR BACKGROUND IN ENGLISH HANDICAPS STUDENT IN ALL SUBJECTS.....			1	4.8	1	1.7
LACK OF GUIDANCE IN THE PROPER CHOICE OF SUBJECTS....			1	4.8	1	1.7
ADVERSE INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUP MEMBERS.....			1	4.8	1	1.7

obstacles to their children's progress: quality of teachers, student's own lack of effort, and long bus runs. These also were the obstacles most frequently mentioned by both parents of matriculants and parents of non-matriculants.

Parental Attitude Toward the Non-matriculation Programs

Evidence that most parents tended to question the value of the non-matriculation programs offered by the high schools may be inferred from the previous findings. The most compelling evidence pointing in this direction may be summarized as follows:

1. The majority of the parents (87 per cent) indicated that they wanted their children placed in the matriculation program.
2. All of the parents of matriculants were program-placement-satisfied whereas only 33 per cent of the parents of non-matriculants indicated this to be so.
3. Parents of matriculants had the highest median level of program-satisfaction of all sub-categories of parents, and parents of non-matriculants had the lowest.
4. The majority of the reasons given by parents of non-matriculants for program dissatisfaction (69 per cent) referred to program-placement-dissatisfaction.

To gain more insight into the thinking of parents on this issue and to supplement the previous evidence, the following excerpts from several interviews are being included:

Case No. 1. I wanted my boy in the matriculation program because it would give him a greater chance to get ahead in the world of work. This year he wasted his time taking vocational courses which he will never use. And as for the general courses in math and science, what value were they to him when he tried to switch back to the matric program? None what-so-ever!

Case No. 2. When they put my daughter out of the matric program, I sent her to another school. They didn't let her take it either. I am against streaming students because it makes those who don't take matric feel inferior. My daughter wanted to become a nurse, and now she can't get into nursing school.

Case No. 3. I would rather have had my boy repeat grade nine to raise his marks than to have him put ahead in the general course. He lost interest in school when this happened because he was hoping to go to college some day, just like his brother. Now he knows he can't.

These excerpts not only illustrate parental tendencies to question the value of the non-matriculation programs but also indicate a relationship between program-placement satisfaction and the vocational aspirations of parents and children.

III DETERMINERS OF EDUCATIONAL VIEWPOINT

The purpose of this section is to indicate whether or not the following factors were determiners of educational viewpoint: place of residence, sex of offspring, and program placement.

Table XIV illustrates the relationship between variation in parental response and place of residence, by listing the items on which parental opinion was obtained and by

TABLE XIV
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIATION IN PARENTAL RESPONSE AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE

ITEMS ON WHICH PARENTAL OPINION WAS OBTAINED	FARM-RESIDING		NON-FARM-RESIDING	
	NUMBER	PER CENT	NUMBER	PER CENT
	(33)		(27)	
PARENTAL DESIRE TO HAVE THEIR CHILDREN PLACED IN THE MATRICULATION PROGRAM.....	30	91	23	85
PARENTAL DESIRE FOR DIFFERENT PROGRAMS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS	6	18	6	22
PARENTAL DESIRE FOR SIMILAR PROGRAMS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS	16	49	10	37
NO OPINION REGARDING DIFFERENT PROGRAMS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS	11	33	11	41
PARENTS' VIEWING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS A TASK OF THE HIGH SCHOOL.....	15	45	15	55
PARENTS' DESIRING THE SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO ALL STUDENTS.....	1	3	2	7
PARENTS' DESIRING THE SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO THOSE STUDENTS UNABLE TO TAKE MATRICULATION..	6	18	9	33
PARENTS' DESIRING THE SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO INTERESTED NON-MATRICULANTS.....	8	24	4	15
PARENTS' DESIRING THE SCHOOLS TO OFFER EXPLORATORY VOCATIONAL COURSES.....	16	48	10	37
PARENTS' DESIRING THE SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR A SPECIFIC JOB.....	1	3	3	11

TABLE XIV (CONTINUED)

ITEMS ON WHICH PARENTAL OPINION WAS OBTAINED	FARM-RESIDING PARENTS (33)		NON-FARM-RESIDING PARENTS (27)	
	NUMBER	PER CENT	NUMBER	PER CENT
PROGRAM-PLACEMENT DISSATISFACTION.....	8	24	6	22
LEVEL OF PROGRAM SATISFACTION				
VERY WELL.....	2	6	4	15
WELL.....	11	33	10	37
FAIRLY.....	13	40	8	30
POORLY.....	6	18	4	15
NOT AT ALL.....	0	0	1	3

indicating the frequencies and percentages of responses for farm-residing parents and for non-farm-residing parents. These findings indicate a large demand on the part of both groups of parents to have their children take the matriculation program and little demand on the part of either group for different programs for boys and girls. The variations in the percentages of responses for the two groups of parents regarding the various items on vocational education, program-placement dissatisfaction, and levels of program satisfaction were small. Table VIII on page 63 reveals little difference in the median levels of satisfaction for the two groups: 2.7 for farm-residing parents and 3.1 for non-farm-residing parents. Obviously, there were no great discrepancies in the frequencies and percentages of responses for the items on which the views of the two groups of parents were compared. Thus, place of residency did not appear to be a determiner of educational viewpoint.

Table XV illustrates the relationship between variation in parental response and sex of offspring by listing the items on which parental opinion was obtained and the frequencies and percentages of responses for parents of boys and girls.

The findings indicate that there was only one item on which there was a wide discrepancy in the percentages of

TABLE XV
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIATION IN PARENTAL RESPONSE AND SEX OF OFFSPRING

ITEMS ON WHICH PARENTAL OPINION WAS OBTAINED	PARENTS OF BOYS NUMBER PER CENT	PARENTS OF GIRLS NUMBER PER CENT
DESIRE TO HAVE CHILDREN PLACED IN THE MATRICULATION PROGRAM...	23 88	30 88
DESIRE FOR DIFFERENT PROGRAMS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS.....	6 18	6 23
INCLUSION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE TASKS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL.....	12 46	19 56
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO ALL STUDENTS.....	1 4	2 6
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS NOT ABLE TO TAKE MATRICULATION.....	6 23	9 27
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO INTERESTED NON-MATRICULANTS.....	5 19	7 21
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER EXPLORATORY VOCATIONAL COURSES.....	10 59	16 47
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR A SPECIFIC JOB.....	2 8	2 6
SATISFACTION WITH THE PLACEMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN IN THE MATRICULATION PROGRAM.....	14 100	25 100
SATISFACTION WITH THE PLACEMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN IN THE NON-MATRICULATION PROGRAMS.....	2 17	5 55

responses for the two groups of parents: parental satisfaction with the placement of their children in the non-matriculation programs. The majority of the parents of girls were satisfied with the placement of their daughters in non-matriculation programs whereas the majority of the parents of boys were not. This discrepancy might be accounted for, at least partially, by the fact that a much larger percentage of boys were in the non-matriculation program.

For the most part, there was little variation in the percentages of responses for parents of boys and girls, and, hence, sex of offspring did not appear to be a predictor of educational viewpoint.

Table XVI demonstrates the relationship between variation in parental responses and program placement by indicating the frequencies and percentages of responses for parents of matriculants and parents of non-matriculants on the various items on which their views were obtained.

The findings indicate that the variation in the percentages of responses for the two groups of parents on the various items relating to vocational education was not great. There was a wide discrepancy in the program-placement satisfaction of the two groups of parents. All of the parents of matriculants were program-placement-satisfied whereas the majority of the parents of non-matriculants were

TABLE XIV
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIATION IN PARENTAL RESPONSE AND PROGRAM PLACEMENT

ITEMS ON WHICH PARENTAL OPINION WAS OBTAINED	PARENTS OF MATRICULANTS (39) NUMBER PER CENT	PARENTS OF NON- MATRICULANTS (21) NUMBER PER CENT
INCLUSION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE TASKS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL.....	20 51	9 43
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER EXPLORATORY VOCATIONAL COURSES.....	16 41	10 48
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR A SPECIFIC JOB.....	1 3	3 8
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS.....	3 8	0 0
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS NOT ABLE TO TAKE MATRICULATION.....	11 28	4 19
DESIRE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO INTERESTED NON-MATRICULANTS.....	4 10	8 38
PROGRAM-PLACEMENT SATISFACTION.....	39 100	7 33
LEVEL OF PROGRAM SATISFACTION		
VERY WELL.....	6 15	0 0
WELL.....	16 41	5 24
FAIRLY.....	14 36	7 33
POORLY.....	3 8	7 33
NOT AT ALL.....	0 0	2 10

not. The majority of the parents of matriculants indicated a high level of program satisfaction whereas the majority of the parents of non-matriculants did not. Table VIII on page 63 reveals that of all the sub-groups of parents, parents of matriculants had the highest median level of satisfaction (3.8) and parents of non-matriculants had the lowest (2.2). Previous evidence indicated little similarity between the reasons for program satisfaction stated by the two groups of parents. With regard to the reasons for program-dissatisfaction, the majority of those given by parents of matriculants reflected their concern for the success of their children in the matriculation program whereas the majority stated by parents of non-matriculants reflected their program-placement-dissatisfaction. From these findings it would appear that program-placement was a determiner of educational viewpoint, with parents of matriculants tending to be more satisfied with the current educational system than parents of non-matriculants.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

An analysis of the data obtained for the sample surveyed gives a consistent and clear picture of the perceptions of the high school curricular program held by the parents of the grade eleven students in Vulcan County in the school year 1964-1965.

An appraisal of the findings revealed that a large majority of the parents wanted their children to take the matriculation program. All of the parents of matriculants were program-placement-satisfied whereas the majority of the parents of non-matriculants were not. With regard to the levels of program satisfaction indicated by parents, the parents of matriculants were the most satisfied group and the parents of the non-matriculants the least satisfied. The median level of satisfaction for the total sample of parents indicated that they were moderately satisfied. The parents of non-matriculants were the only sub-group who indicated a definite tendency toward program dissatisfaction.

Almost all of the reasons for program satisfaction given by parents of matriculants related to either vocational aspirations or the values of a liberal education. The most frequently mentioned reason for program satisfaction given by parents of matriculants was that the matriculation program leaves open to students the widest opportunities for further education and choice of careers. Most of the reasons for program satisfaction stated by parents of non-matriculants reflected their concern for the academic success of their children. The most frequently stated reason for program satisfaction given by parents of non-matriculants was that the non-matriculation program enables the student who

is unable to continue in matriculation to complete high school. The similarity among the reasons for program satisfaction given by the two groups of parents was slight, and thus it is apparent that they do not view the two programs as having similar values.

Most of the reasons for program dissatisfaction given by parents of matriculants reflected their concern for the success of their children in the matriculation program whereas most of the reasons for program dissatisfaction given by parents of non-matriculants reflected their program-placement dissatisfaction. The similarity between the reasons for program dissatisfaction mentioned by parents of matriculants and parents of non-matriculants was small. Parents regarded the quality of the teachers and the students' own lack of effort, in that order, to be the greatest obstacles to the progress of their children in the programs they were taking.

Approximately half of the parents did not regard vocational education or training to be part of the task of the high school. Of the half who regarded vocational education to be a task of the high school, the majority indicated that they desired the high schools to offer vocational courses of an exploratory nature rather than vocational training for a specific job, and that these

courses should be confined to students unable to take the matriculation program or to interested non-matriculants. Even though half of the parents considered vocational education or training to be a task of the high school, the parental demand for this kind of education for their own children was small. Furthermore, the majority of the parents who were dissatisfied with the placement of their children in non-matriculation programs did not regard vocational education or training to be a task of the high school.

The reasons for considering the offering of exploratory vocational courses to be a task of the high school appeared to reflect parental concern to have these courses become an integral part of the general education of the students in order to give them a basic preparation for the world of work. Most of the reasons for not considering vocational education or training to be a task of the high school appeared to reflect parental concern to have the high school attend to its task of offering a good general education for all students and also their concern about the quality of the current vocational courses.

Most of the parents wished the high schools to offer similar programs for boys and girls. The most frequently mentioned reason for desiring similar programs was that

both men and women seek the same higher education and job opportunities and hence need the same education. None of the reasons given by the small percentage of parents who thought the high schools should offer different programs for boys and girls appeared to reflect a desire for major changes in the total program but only changes in particular areas. The findings appeared to indicate that the lack of demand for different programs for boys and girls reflected parental desire to have both take the matriculation program. There was considerable evidence to indicate that the majority of the parents tended to question the value of the non-matriculation programs offered by the high schools.

Program-placement appeared to be a determiner of educational viewpoint whereas place of residence and sex of offspring did not.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

I. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this investigation was to gain as clear a picture as possible of the perceptions of the high school curricular program held by the parents of the grade eleven students in Vulcan County in the school year 1964-1965. The major issues examined were the kinds of educational programs desired by the parents, program-placement satisfaction, program satisfaction, program obstacles, and the determiners of educational viewpoint.

The semi-standardized interview technique was used to gather data. Since it was so time-consuming to employ this technique, the sample was limited to either parent of sixty per cent of the total population of the grade eleven students. The total population was made up of fifty-five farm-residing parents and forty-five non-farm-residing parents. When the random selection was made, the total sample consisted of thirty-three farm-residing parents and twenty-seven non-farm-residing parents.

For the purposes of analysis, the information obtained from the open-ended questions was summarized in

point form and then quantified in order to obtain the frequencies of responses and the percentage each was of the total number. For the one closed question which consisted of a five point scale to measure the level of program satisfaction, the medians were calculated. In addition to this, a limited amount of documentation was employed to indicate significant trends and interrelationships.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The finding which stood out in the information gained from this investigation is the high regard parents had for the matriculation program. A large majority of the parents wanted their children to take the matriculation program. All of the parents of matriculants were program-placement-satisfied whereas the majority of the parents of non-matriculants were not. Of all the sub-groups of parents, the parents of matriculants had the highest median level of program satisfaction and the parents of non-matriculants had the lowest. The median level of satisfaction for the total sample of parents indicated that they were moderately satisfied.

Vocational aspirations appeared to be the most important factor determining program satisfaction on the part of parents of matriculants, and academic success appeared to

be the most important factor determining program satisfaction on the part of parents of non-matriculants. There was little similarity among the reasons for program satisfaction given by the two groups of parents, and thus it is apparent that they did not view the two programs as having similar values. The majority of the reasons for program dissatisfaction given by the parents of matriculants reflected their concern for the academic success of their children whereas the majority of the reasons given by parents of non-matriculants reflected their program-placement-dissatisfaction. These findings relating to program dissatisfaction are understandable in the light of the tremendous demand for the matriculation program indicated by parents.

Half of the parents regarded vocational education or training to be a part of the task of the high school, but since the majority of these parents did not want it for their own children, the parental demand for vocational education was, in fact, small. The reasons stated by parents for considering the offering of exploratory vocational courses to be part of the task of the high school primarily appeared to reflect their desire to have these courses become an integral part of the general education of the students. The reasons given by parents for not considering vocational education to be a task of the high school mainly

appeared to reflect their desire to have the high school attend to its task of offering a good general education for all students.

Most of the parents wished the high schools to offer similar programs for girls and boys, and this stand appeared to reflect parental desire to have both take the matriculation program. The findings, in general, indicated that most parents tended to question the value of the non-matriculation programs offered by the high schools.

Program placement appeared to be a determiner of educational viewpoint, but place of residence and sex of offspring did not.

III IMPLICATIONS

Upon the completion of a study such as this, one is bound to reflect upon and reappraise its findings. The guiding question with which one must grapple is, "What is its value?" In the discussion that follows an attempt will be made to answer this question.

Much can be accomplished through an assessment of public opinion. This study has both theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical Implications

Because this investigation involved a study in depth of selected issues relating to the school program, the findings revealed many significant trends and interrelationships which provide promising leads for further research. The following are some clusters of questions growing out of this study which might provoke further research:

1. Is the demand for matriculation indicated by this study general throughout the province? If the parents of children in grades seven, eight, and nine were polled, would they indicate as strong a demand for the matriculation program? Do the current non-matriculation programs lack status among the general public? If so, why?

2. What is the attitude of the general public toward vocational education as a task of the high school? What is the demand for vocational education at the high school level in industrial areas? Was the demand for vocational education in the area under study small because of its agriculturally-based economy?

3. To what extent is the academic success of offspring a determiner of parental views of the tasks of the high school and the adequacy of its program? To what extent are sex of offspring, place of residence, and program-placement determiners of educational viewpoint among the general public?

Practical Implications

In a democratic society it is assumed that the schools are responsible to the people they serve. Furthermore, an educator will find that his policies will be misunderstood or ineffective if they do not reflect public demands. To be successful, he must keep his finger on the pulse of the public. In spite of these facts, seldom is a systematic effort made to determine public opinion on educational matters.

This study may serve as a basis for a searching reappraisal of the school program in Vulcan County. Certainly, an investigation of how effectively the school program is being implemented would appear to be very much in order. If some of the findings are based on public misunderstandings of current educational practices, they may serve as bases for public relations programs designed to interpret the school program to the people.

SUMMATION

As one looks back on what was accomplished by this study, it provided an intensive picture of parental views of the high school program in Vulcan County. As one looks ahead, it is hoped that the information contained herein will be of value to the educators in Vulcan County as they reappraise their school system and that it will make a significant contribution to the Small High School Study.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

PROGRAMS, COURSES, AND CREDITS OFFERED IN GRADE ELEVEN
IN COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

GRADE XI

<u>ACADEMIC</u>	<u>CREDITS</u>
Language 20	5
Literature 20	5
Social Studies 20	5
Science 20	5
Biology 20	5
French 20	5
Math. 20	5
	<hr/> 35

<u>COMMERCIAL</u>	
English 23	5
Sociology 20	5
Math. 21	5
Typing 20	5
Shorthand 20	5
Office Practice	5
Bookkeeping 20	5
	<hr/> 35

<u>GENERAL</u>	
English 23	5
Sociology 20	5
Math. 22	5
Science 22	5

Options:

Power Mechanics 10	4
Industrial Arts 20	4
Home Economics	4
Crafts 10	4
Geography 20	5
Psychology 20	5
Law 20	3
Physical Education 20	3

To make 35 - 37

RECORD FORM FOR INTERVIEW

What program or course is he taking?

What other programs were available?

Do you have much contact with the school?

Do you feel that you have sufficient information about the school's programs?

How do you feel that the school might give you more information?

Main Questions:

How did he get into this particular program?

How much say did you have in deciding what program he would take?

What program did you want him to take?

Is he able to get the kind of program you wanted for him in this particular area?

If he isn't, where would he have to go in order to get it? Did you consider sending him there?

How satisfied are you with the program he is taking? Rate according to the following scale:

Not at all	Poorly	Fairly	Well	Very Well
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>

- 2 -

For what reasons are you dissatisfied with the program he is taking?

For what reasons are you satisfied with the program he is taking?

What do you consider to be the biggest obstacle to his progress in the program he is taking?

- 3 -

If he were starting high school all over again, what program would you want him to take? Why?

Do you think a student should receive job training in high school or should this be provided in another institution after he leaves school?

Do you think that the program should be different for girls than it is for boys?

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